

# Grove Park GriefLine

Spring 2016

*Our Grove Park Family is faithfully dedicated to restoring dignity, offering hope and providing comfort*



## HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU'RE FEELING BETTER?

Although everyone has her/his own style and timeline of grief, you can measure your progress by certain feelings and behaviors which come about as you feel better.

As your sense of humor returns and you find yourself laughing, you know you are feeling better.

As you find your mood swings not so high and so low you can feel the time lengthen between upsets.

When you hear yourself giving some human qualities to your deceased loved one as you recall past moments, then you know you are moving through the worst of your grief.

As you find yourself making major decisions you take responsibility for determining the quality of your life...you are feeling better.

When you are making new friends, you insure that you will have supportive people around you in the future and seldom have to be lonely.

Finally, when you learn that your life is in your hands and that you are capable of taking charge, you will know you are truly growing.



The only people who think there's a time limit for grief, have never lost a piece of their heart.



Take all the time you need.



## **EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED**

Facing the loss of a loved one is always a challenge. No matter how much we understand grief or think we know about how it feels to grieve our actual experience in the midst of facing a loss can be full of surprises. No two experiences of loss are exactly the same. I tell my clients that the best way to control grief is to expect the unexpected. There are many reasons why grief cannot be a smooth predictable path that we simply follow and complete. Above all, our emotions in response to loss are apt to be more intense than anything we have felt before. One of the greatest challenges we face in grieving a loss is how out of control of our emotions we feel. We may deal with many conflicting and intense emotions that may erupt unpredictably at any moment. Few experiences in life bring out so many complex feelings as does facing loss. We may not be comfortable with many of these feelings. Some may even be new to us. Often clients tell me it is okay with them to feel sad but they cannot bear to feel angry at someone they loved for dying and leaving them. Our reactions may not see right or fair but it is human to feel angry and resentful after a loss whether we can admit it or not. Facing uncomfortable reactions like this is part of the job of healing ourselves. Another aspect of the unexpected with grief is that we cannot control the feelings that take us over. This is because grief needs to be expressed not stifled whether we like it or not. When we are in the midst of sorrow, we cannot choose exactly how and when we will react. We may have just had a good cry, wiped away tears, and imagine we have handled our feelings and are in charge of our emotions. Then out of nowhere intense emotions suddenly erupt because of a photograph, a memory, a comment from someone else or any other reminder of our loss. Unexpected bursts of feelings make us feel as if we are grieving anew. The truth is, we may never know when the next bout of emotions will hit us. That is normal grief. What can we do to help ourselves grieve? Try dealing with grief feelings the way one might deal with a physical illness. Get whatever help you need be it counseling, a support group, or other people to talk with. Do not try to go it alone. Give yourself time to heal. Remember recovery does not happen overnight. A broken leg or hysterectomy take many weeks to heal so does the loss of a loved one. Treat yourself lovingly in the process. Be as kind and understanding to yourself as you can be. You can and will get through this painful experience and ultimately you will be stronger and wiser because of it.

Judy Tatelbaum



**WE'RE ALWAYS IN NEED OF NEW VOLUNTEERS.  
PLEASE CALL 536-6644 AND ASK FOR PAULA..**

## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



I am available to discuss with you and your family the process of spirituality in healing from grief and loss. If I can assist you, please call 803-536-6644 or email me at [groveparkhospiceken@gmail.com](mailto:groveparkhospiceken@gmail.com)

Ken Hay, Chaplain  
Bereavement Care Coordinator

### IS BEREAVEMENT REALLY LIKE A CAR WASH?

Shortly after Janet's husband died, some people from a local women's group came to talk to her. They told her some things about what they believed she would face in her bereavement. For example, they said that she would just have to be patient and submit herself to something they called "the grief process". According to them there were some "stages" that she would "have to go through." They were sure about this they said because they knew what it was like to be widowed and also they had read some books about widowhood. Janet's visitors said there were three or four or five of these stages that she would experience. Another person said there were seven stages and one person even said there were ten. However many stages there were supposed to be all of these people told Janet that when she "got through" with her bereavement then she would be over and done with her grieving. She would be able to put aside her deceased husband, no longer be troubled by memories of him and be free to live her own life in the future. Janet didn't feel confident about any of this. She worried if she could live up to it all. She hesitantly approached a good friend who worked for a local hospice program as a bereavement counselor. Leora told Janet to put all of this foolishness right out of her mind. The thing that most stuck in Janet's mind was when Leora said: "BEREAVEMENT IS NOT LIKE A CAR WASH!" Leora explained that after someone important to you dies, it is not like you drive in to an automatic car wash where they hook you up to the machine, drag you through a series of experiences one after the other (rewash rinse soap, wash, rinse again, wax and dry), and then you come out the other end all clean and beautiful again. Leora reminded Janet that although she had been victimized by Tom's death, she did not have to be a passive victim of all the losses that followed. Leora said that coping with loss is very much an individual experience. There are no magic sets of stages. On the contrary, Leora suggested that Janet could influence the course of her own bereavement at least in some degree. Leora encouraged Janet to think about some ways in which she could begin to take charge of her life even if they only represented a few small steps at first. As time passed and she tried out various coping strategies, Janet became more confident that she could become a survivor, not just of Tom's death but also of all the many secondary losses and new challenges that had since confronted her. Above all, Janet also became increasingly determined not just to be another passive object in a bereavement carwash. She resolved that she would never forget Tom, that he would always occupy a special place in her heart and mind. And she was unwavering in her conviction that Tom would want her to live as well as she could. When we are bereaved we can all put aside shallow advice and superficial accounts about what we should or might do. We can make our own choices and find our own way to go forward. Perhaps we will take just a few steps at a time, but still they will be steps of our own choosing. That is the real way to chart our own course through loss and grief to a better life ahead.

"TO LIVE IN HEARTS WE LEAVE BEHIND IS NOT TO DIE." – THOMAS CAMPBELL

[WWW.WHATSYOURGRIEF.COM](http://WWW.WHATSYOURGRIEF.COM)



Grove Park Hospice  
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Orangeburg, SC 29116

## Helpful Bereavement Websites:

<http://www.aarp.org/family/lifeafterloss/>  
<http://www.hospicenet.org/html/bereavement.html>  
<http://www.hospicefoundation.org>  
<http://www.griefnet.org>  
<http://goodgrief.org/grief>  
<http://www.hospicehelp.org/events.htm>  
[http://www.tributes.com/grief\\_recovery\\_center/index](http://www.tributes.com/grief_recovery_center/index)  
<http://www.griefrecoverymethod.com/about-us>

If you have comments, suggestions, or would like to submit a poem or article, please  
contact Ken Hay, Bereavement Care Coordinator at Grove Park Hospice Care  
"No one ever told me that grief felt so like hell."  
C.S. Lewis 803.536.6644